



## **Is Quality in Capacity Building and Training Institution Development Matters the Most? Setting Benchmarking Process and Benchmark Standards for Training Institutions WALMI Bhopal a Case in Point**

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**Abstract:** *Water and Land Management Institutes across country had a very specific mandate to cater the needs of the specific target group like land and water managers, irrigation engineers, civil engineers, water management specialists, agriculture specialists, gender and social development experts, professionals, para – professionals, community leaders, water users and farmers. Over time the WALMIs in different states took larger responsibilities and widened their network, venturing in natural resources development and management, community based institution development and management, monitoring, evaluation, learning and documentation in the cross sectoral setting. The WALMI, Bhopal in its recent past have been at the fulcrum of the training and institution development in the state of Madhya Pradesh. WALMI, Bhopal being one of the key training institutions aspire to evolve a broad framework of quality management in the training and development, with the sole objective of setting benchmark standards for state level training institutions, it conducted a National Workshop at Bhopal. The present paper outlines the purpose, process and products that may suit the current and future requirements of the state level training institutions in the state and elsewhere. The workshop proceedings led to the internal churning and ignited the process of coining the benchmark standards for academic qualities, enabling infrastructures, standard operating processes to conduct and manage the trainings and forging the inter – institutional linkages in the current and future institutional eco – system. The paper also provides the opportunities for the readers and professionals interested in training and capacity building of the human resources at various levels to contribute and enrich the process of adopting and adapting to the new benchmarking system and benchmark standards. It provides an opportunity to provide the best practices evolved over time and mainstream the key learning by converting the best practices in to indicators. The paper also highlights the critical gaps and underlines the information requirement to satisfy the necessary and sufficient conditions for effective measurement and monitoring framework for quality management at such training institutions.*

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### Context:

Institutions and individuals in the ever increasing competitive world thrive to out – perform each other and or continue to raise their efficiency bar in all spheres of life, more so in professional world the competition is becoming stiff and every single count, counts. Among all resources at play to produce desired results in appropriate quantity, of predefined and perceived quality and on time, the human resources are of prime importance. The dynamic interplay among the resources through biotic or abiotic processes within the subsets of the components to complete any and every system depends on human interface. Be it the technological, economic, anthropologic or any other sphere of activity, the human resources falls in the realm of dynamic consequences.

In the entire spectrum of empowerment to passive participation, the human capacity becomes the hall mark of change process. In present times, there appears a pressing demand for fast – forward change sequences and the levers of change are the human resources deployed at every step of the change process.

In this backdrop, the Workshop on “Establishing Standard Benchmarks for State Level Training Institutions” delves on understanding and mainstreaming the concept of benchmarking in this arena. The benchmarking conceptually encompasses variety of measurements and evaluations of the processes, technologies and or resources with an ultimate objective of gauging the improvement of organizational performance. At times the benchmarking is perceived as

processes mapping to compare with the best practices. It helps compare and contrast the outputs and outcomes within and or among organizations and individuals.

Benchmarking envisages measurement of key performance criteria, identification of entities, which may have similar performance data, comparison of the performance of the organizations and analysis of the reasons for the differences in performance. The very concept of benchmarking helps evolve strategies to:

- Change the work culture of the organization from passive inward looking to being active and outward looking;
- Improve the quantity and quality of the performances within an organization;
- Assist monitoring of the organizational performance by the concern stakeholders to finally improve the accountability;

### Understanding Benchmarking – the process and Benchmarks – The Standards:

**Benchmark:** Benchmark is a standard or set of standards that are used as reference point for evaluating performance both in terms of quantity and quality. A benchmark will be stated as a value, quantitative or qualitative, that can be measured across time and space.

**Type of Benchmarks:** The working group proposes to develop three different types of benchmarks for state level training institutions:



- (a) **Process Benchmarks:** These are benchmarks are based on the work procedures and protocols that are employed for the completion of set of activities.

The working group will develop process benchmarks that will enable the training institutions to compare their present performance against these process benchmarks. Process benchmarks have the advantage that provides a framework to the training institution for the development of its own Manual of Standard Operating Procedure.

- (b) **Performance Benchmarks:**

Performance benchmarks are based on the results of the training institutions. These results are expressed as outputs and outcomes from the main activity of the institution.

The working group will articulate performance benchmarks for training institutions to facilitate a comparison of the performance of the institutions against the sector performance as well as against the

- (c) **Standards Benchmarks:** These are sectoral benchmarks which are an expression of aspired value that each of the training institution aims to achieve.

The working group will develop and state standard benchmarks for training institutions so that each of

the institutions can map their present position against these *industrial* standards.

### Framework of Benchmark

Each benchmark identified and developed by the working group will have four dimensions, namely, Parameter; Indicator; Benchmark Value; and Data Required.

- (a) **Parameter:** Parameter is an expression of a characteristic that the training institution aspires for. For example, one of the parameter for the training institution for its Infrastructure Benchmarks could be *Inclusive Infrastructure*. This parameter will then set indicators that in the aggregate will comment of the whether the physical infrastructure provides barrier free access for, say, the physically challenged trainee participants.

- (b) **Indicator:** Indicator is the measure that shows the situation for the given parameter. Indicators are expressed as SMART, which implies Specific to the parameter, Measureable that they can be expressed in any one of the commonly accepted units of measurement, Achievable in the context in which they are expressed, Relevant to the given parameter and within a given Time period. For example, one of the indicators for inclusive infrastructure could be *barrier free unassisted access to wheelchair bound trainee participant*



*to all the classrooms of the training institution.*

*wheelchair bound trainees participants.*

(c) **Benchmark Value:** Benchmark value will be the expression against which the training institution will be compared and assessed. This value will be based on best practices within the sector, based on discussions with the peers and will be essentially a value that has been demonstrated and hence it can be replicated and adopted by the institutions. For example, benchmark for inclusive infrastructure can be *all floors of the training institution have toilets for*

(d) **Data Requirement:** Based on the indicator the requirement of the data will be specified for each indicator defined. This definition will be important to bring consistency to data during different time periods as well as across different training institutions. For example, the data requirement for the benchmark value given above could be *Report of disability audit for infrastructure of training institution.*

### The Benchmark Matrix

The matrix that will be used to represent the benchmark for the training institution b the working group will be based on the following tabular format.

| Attribute to define the Benchmark | Type of Benchmark        | Parameters                                    | Indicators                        | Benchmarks  | Data requirement                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>ACADEMIC STANDARD</b>          |                          |   |                                   |   |   |
| <b>Academic Process</b>           | <i>Process Benchmark</i> | <b>Seven stages of training been followed</b> | Training Need Analysis undertaken | TNA based on multi-stakeholder consultation   | Methodology and Tools undertaken to conduct TNA |
|                                   |                          |   | Training Curriculum Designed      | Curriculum developed in consultation with client department and external resource persons | Curriculum plan and learning material           |
|                                   |                          |   |                                   |   |   |



| Attribute to define the Benchmark | Type of Benchmark | Parameters | Indicators                        | Benchmarks  | Data requirement   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
|                                   |                   |            | Sessions Plan prepared            | Sessions plan prepared in consultation with the resource person; course director and client department                      | Session plan with learning objectives                          |
|                                   |                   |            | Andragogy tools defined           | Course director and resource persons have interacted before finalization of Andragogical tools                              | Details of Andragogical methods and tools used during training |
|                                   |                   |            | Feedback mechanism developed      | Feedback mechanism and content developed in consultation with Course Director and Client department                         | Feedback forms/ alternative tools                              |
|                                   |                   |            | Evaluation of Training undertaken | End of training evaluation methodology and content developed in consultation with the Course Director and Client Department | End of training Evaluation report                              |
|                                   |                   |            |                                   |   |  |



| Attribute to define the Benchmark | Type of Benchmark            | Parameters   | Indicators  | Benchmarks  | Data requirement  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
|                                   |                              |  | Impact assessment of Training undertaken                                | Multi-stakeholder consultation for impact assessment of training  | Impact assessment report  |
| Training Needs Analysis           | <i>Process Benchmark</i>     | Number and type of different stakeholders covered by TNA   | Tools for conducting TNA  | TNA conducted using any or more of the following tools: 6R matrix, 360 <sup>0</sup> feedback loop; Force Field Analysis | List of tools used and the information generated through the use of these tools |
| Training Needs Analysis           | <i>Performance Benchmark</i> | TNA contextualize expected change of the client department | TNA specifies value addition to the organization on account of training | TNA defines the key result areas for the proposed training  |   |
| Training Needs Analysis           | <i>Standards Benchmark</i>   | Use of TNA for curriculum design                           | TNA identifies capacity and/or competency gaps                          | TNA used to develop curriculum based on ASK framework   | Curriculum design to be structured on ASK framework                             |

### The churning and the learning – the workshop outputs:

The workshop on setting Benchmark Standards for State Level Training Institutions ended with a very strong positive note as concluded by the dignitaries especially Shree Iqbal Singh Bains, IAS, ACS, Shree Gyanendra Badgyya, IAS and

Ms. Urmila Shukla, IAS, Director WALMI, Bhopal. In the concluding remarks by the dignitaries, it was clearly articulated that time has come to do serious introspections, look inside both individually and institutionally to realize the full potential of each and every human being irrespective of her or his relative position in the society at large.



The workshop resoundingly spelt out the key concerns in terms benchmarks for academic standards, infrastructure standards, operational and procedural standards and inters – institutional linkage standards.

The workshop in unison voice resolved that “WALMI, Bhopal would take a leap forward in setting up the standards in all the four key aspects of capacity building and training management and shall pave the way forward for other to emulate in shortest possible time lag”.

The workshop further recommended that:

- WALMI, Bhopal would soon set – up a small task force internally and may also invite couple of external individuals to facilitate the process of setting up actual, adoptable and appropriate standards;
- The WALMI, Bhopal should come up with a Standard Operating Procedure and an Operational Manual to effectively internalize the standards;
- Efforts must be steered to approach the NABAT, New Delhi to provide due accreditation to WALMI, Bhopal in the first place and later other state level training institutions and other training providers may follow the similar process;

### **The key concerns – Academic standards, infrastructural standards, process standards and networking standards:**

1. Benchmarking of Academic Standards.
2. Benchmarking of infrastructural Standards.
3. Benchmarking of management And Procedural Standards.
4. Inter institutional Linkages.

### **Academic standards**

Suggested issues to be covered:

- Course Planning :
  1. Preplanning of courses by discussing with experts
  2. Proportion of theory versus practical inputs during training
  3. Practical component and demonstrations
  4. Finalization of course curriculums
  5. Standard Courses versus tailor made courses
  6. Long term v/s short term courses
  7. Training evaluation mechanism
  8. Feed Back Analysis
  9. Part-time courses v/s full time courses
  10. Sponsored v/s self funded courses
  11. Adoption of best practices and innovative ideas
  12. Assessment of relevancy of programs.





13. Centralized versus cascading training structure
  14. Should there be a Screening mechanism of participants
  15. Whether TA DA be given to participants from training institute? (Yes/No/ Why?)
- Faculty/ Resource persons/ Training partners
    1. Number of Core Faculty, guest faculty, expected proportion etc.
    2. Mode of selection of guest faculty
    3. Honorarium structure
    4. Other facilities, if any...
    5. Should any incentives be given to permanent staff?
    6. Proportion of teaching v/s non teaching staff
    7. Sessions and emphasis for activity oriented classes.
  - Monitoring:
    1. annual report
    2. progress assessment,
    3. budgetary and academic planning,
    4. Implementation of the programs and academic assessment and quality.
    5. Digitalization of Academic and Administrative records
    6. A survey among the parent institution of the participants for checking about the improvement in the teaching of the participant teachers.

### Infrastructural standards

Suggested Issues to be covered:

- Class rooms
- Auditoriums/ conference halls
- Meeting halls
- Laboratories

- Audio-Visual/ training material development unit
- Hostel
- Mess
- Demonstration sites – within campus/off campus
- Computer facilities
- Transportation facilities
- Sports facilities
- Facilities for cultural events
- Landscaping etc.
- Health care of Participants
- Campus location, approach facilities
- ANY OTHER ISSUE, WHICH PARTICIPANTS MAY CONSIDER TO INCLUDE

### Management and procedural standards

Suggested Issues to be covered:

- Resource Generation :
  1. Fee structure: standard or program based?
  2. Procedure of computation of program costs
  3. Incentives and their sharing mechanism if any...
  4. Grant, fee, consultancy, and their proportions if any...
- Short Term Courses for Administrative Officers and Non-Teaching Staff
- Program budgeting
- Responsibilities v/s controls
- Hiring procedures of Resource persons
- Boarding arrangements
- Maintenance of assets
- House keeping
- Security
- Travel reservation facilities





### Inter-institutional Linkages

Suggested Issues to be covered:

- Sharing of expertise and its mechanism
- liaison/networking with Resource Persons, University, UGC and various

training institutes at National and International level for effective training

- Development of new training material
- Sharing of existing training material
- Interaction programs for M. Phil. Ph.D., and Post Doctoral Scholars.
- Making interns available;

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